

MINUTES
Public Hearing of the College Park City Council
Tuesday, May 14, 2013
7:12 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

13-O-05

**An Ordinance of the Mayor and Council of the City of College Park to Adopt the Fiscal
Year 2014 Operating and Capital Budget of the City of College Park Maryland**

PRESENT: Mayor Fellows; Councilmembers Kabir, Wojahn, Catlin, Dennis, Stullich, Day, Afzali and Mitchell.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Joe Nagro, City Manager; Janeen Miller, City Clerk; Suellen Ferguson, City Attorney; Chantal Cotton, Assistant to the City Manager; Steve Groh, Director of Finance; Bob Ryan, Director of Public Services; Josh Ratner, Student Liaison.

Mayor Fellows opened the public hearing on 13-O-05 at 7:12 p.m. and invited Mr. Groh to give an overview. The packet contains a summary of changes made between the requested budget and this revised budget and includes revised pay tables to reflect a 2% COLA to be effective July 1, 2013.

Comments from the audience:

Dave Dorsch, 4607 Calvert Road: He expects members of the Council to be mindful of how they spend City money but it doesn't look as if they have done been. The City has increased its taxable base and receives speed camera fines, so with all this revenue, the tax rate should be lowered. He knows the City will not lower the tax rate when the assessments go back up. Council should remove the increase in the student liaison stipend – it is not an elected position and the position should not be paid. The City should eliminate the two part-time code enforcement people. Now is not the time to add them when the City has done so much work the last year looking for ways to reduce noise problems. Council should wait and see what comes of this effort and show good-will toward the landlords. Council should try to get more done with carrots rather than sticks.

Christine Nagle, 9506 52nd Avenue: It doesn't seem there has been due diligence in looking for ways to cut the budget before coming to the residents for a tax increase. She sees no pattern of cuts or decreases – in fact, she sees increases. Residents haven't seen any changes in their own budgets. Employees can be treated well when times are good, but residents are living on a fixed income and costs are getting higher, and the City is asking for a tax increase. Go back and take a hard look at the budget. Or take it out of the undesignated reserve fund instead of a tax increase.

Tim Miller, 5119 Niagara Place: The City should not raise property taxes –you can easily find ways to work within current funds. Have Code Enforcement cut apartment inspections in half, so they are done every-other-year. Don't give employees any raises this year. Eliminate overtime. That would give you the savings so you don't have to increase property taxes. It shouldn't cost \$15,000 to install a sink in the animal shelter – he can do it for less than \$1,500.

Mary Cook, 4705 Kiernan Road: She is opposed to any increase in property taxes. The City has no long range vision. If you look at future years you know property tax rates will be increasing – you can see that in the economic swing. People are not getting raises at work, are getting furloughed, and are seeing increases in insurance rates. It's a sad thing to ask residents for more money. Cuts need to be made from every department: you shouldn't ask for new FTEs. The budget is supposed to "create increased value for City tax dollars", but she doesn't think she is getting increased value for her tax dollar.

David Gray, 7306 Radcliffe Drive: He is opposed to the property tax increase; the budget does not make a compelling case to justify this increase. If we can move \$1.5M from this budget to pay for a City Hall then there is enough money to cover what you need without raising taxes. We don't need electronic voting machines for elections with 1,100 voters; paper ballots work fine. The budget hasn't gone through any revisions or reductions. You spent \$30,000 to market the Farmers Market...if you have money for that you don't need to come to him with increased taxes.

Jack Robson, 4710 Harvard Road: He thinks it is a superb idea to include money in the budget for voting machines. We will discuss it later to see if they are really required. Anyone who just says "throw them out" doesn't really understand what is going on. The election workers have a long day. If anyone has questions, they should contact the Board of Election Supervisors.

There being no further public comment, Mayor Fellows closed the public hearing at 7:30 p.m.

Janeen S. Miller, CMC

Date Approved